

A person wearing a grey hoodie and a green beanie is seen from behind, painting a thick yellow curved line on a large purple wall. The wall has some faint, abstract graffiti in blue and pink. The scene is set outdoors with some dry leaves on the ground.

CITY OF NEWARK

# Arts & Culture Annual Report

**2021**

CITY OF **NEWARK**  
Mayor Ras J. Baraka





**N**ewark has a long and rich history as a center for the arts. My administration seeks to provide a broad span of opportunities for residents to experience culture and art, and to write a new page in our city's history through artistic expression. Our prioritization of and investment in artists reflects a broader shift that has taken place in our community. For one, the arts have increasingly supported Newark's economy especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Secondly, we have long utilized the expression of art to address some of the greatest challenges. Throughout the pandemic, the City has found innovative ways to provide critical resources to our residents. A major component of that has been through our Division of Arts and Cultural Affairs under the leadership of Director fayemi shakur.

One of the most significant accomplishments to date was the creation of the City of Newark's first-ever arts grant program, the Creative Catalyst Fund (CCF), announced in 2020. In 2021 alone, 134 artists and organizations received direct grants, over 1,000 additional artists were paid for their work on CCF projects, and over 250,000 Newark residents and visitors were served by high-quality cultural programming. CCF supports the art that makes our neighborhoods vibrant, and is ultimately an investment in the future of our city and its residents.

Our public art projects have turned blank canvases of regular city streets and parks into thriving spaces through a unique pattern of storytelling that reflects our city's history and the spirit and pulse of what it truly means to be *Newark and Proud of It*.

Through our social justice projects, we are intentionally using art to not only educate but also express the need for social action and policy changes that have negatively influenced disenfranchised populations. Moreover, in Newark, we are creating a city where all residents work collectively to achieve the right to have the power in the decisions that affect them and shape their future, and where youth are empowered to become future leaders.

Newark artists have continually been recognized for their forward-thinking leadership on reimagining our public spaces and creating public art that inclusively tells the story of our people. We are very proud of the work and contribution of all of the amazing grantees for their contributions to our city's economy and neighborhood vitality.

Thank you so much to all of our funders, without whom all of this could not have been possible. Your investment in our city's future has not only enhanced our community but has changed so many lives.

We welcome all of our amazing supporters and encourage you to love our city as much as we do! Come shop at our stores, eat at our restaurants and most importantly explore and enjoy the magnificent art on display in Newark.

Please enjoy the 2021 City of Newark Arts and Culture Annual Report as it reflects our key programs and successes this past year as part of our comprehensive strategy and value framework that everyone in our city can aspire to achieve to move us all forward.

Forward ever, backwards never!

Ras J. Baraka  
Mayor



**MAYOR RAS BARAKA**



**FAYEMI SHAKUR**

**“My City  
has a heart  
for Artists.”**

– Antoinette Montague  
*Creative Catalyst Fund Grantee*





# Creative Catalyst Fund

The Creative Catalyst Fund (CCF) issued a second year of equitable financial support for Newark's arts sector. Announced in January 2020 as the City of Newark's first ever arts grant program, the inaugural round of CCF grants offered much-needed support in the early months of the COVID-19 crisis took an enormous financial toll on the creative sector.

Each year, a rotating selection committee comprised of community representatives, city staff, and arts experts, has convened a rigorous yet expedited review process to allow for rapid distribution of funds in partnership with local arts service provider Newark Arts.

In 2021, CCF was supported by \$750,000 from the City of Newark and \$50,000 from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, for a total of \$800,000 awarded to 134 artists, art collectives and cultural organizations.

The average award amount was \$10,900 for organizations and \$3,800 for artists. See page 16 for a list of CCF grantees and jurors.

The Fund is a multi-year initiative providing up to \$1 million annually to Newark's creative community for at least three years.

**“The positive financial impact of this grant goes without saying. However, the distinguished honor of being a Creative Catalyst grantee has also increased my resume and allowed other opportunities.”**

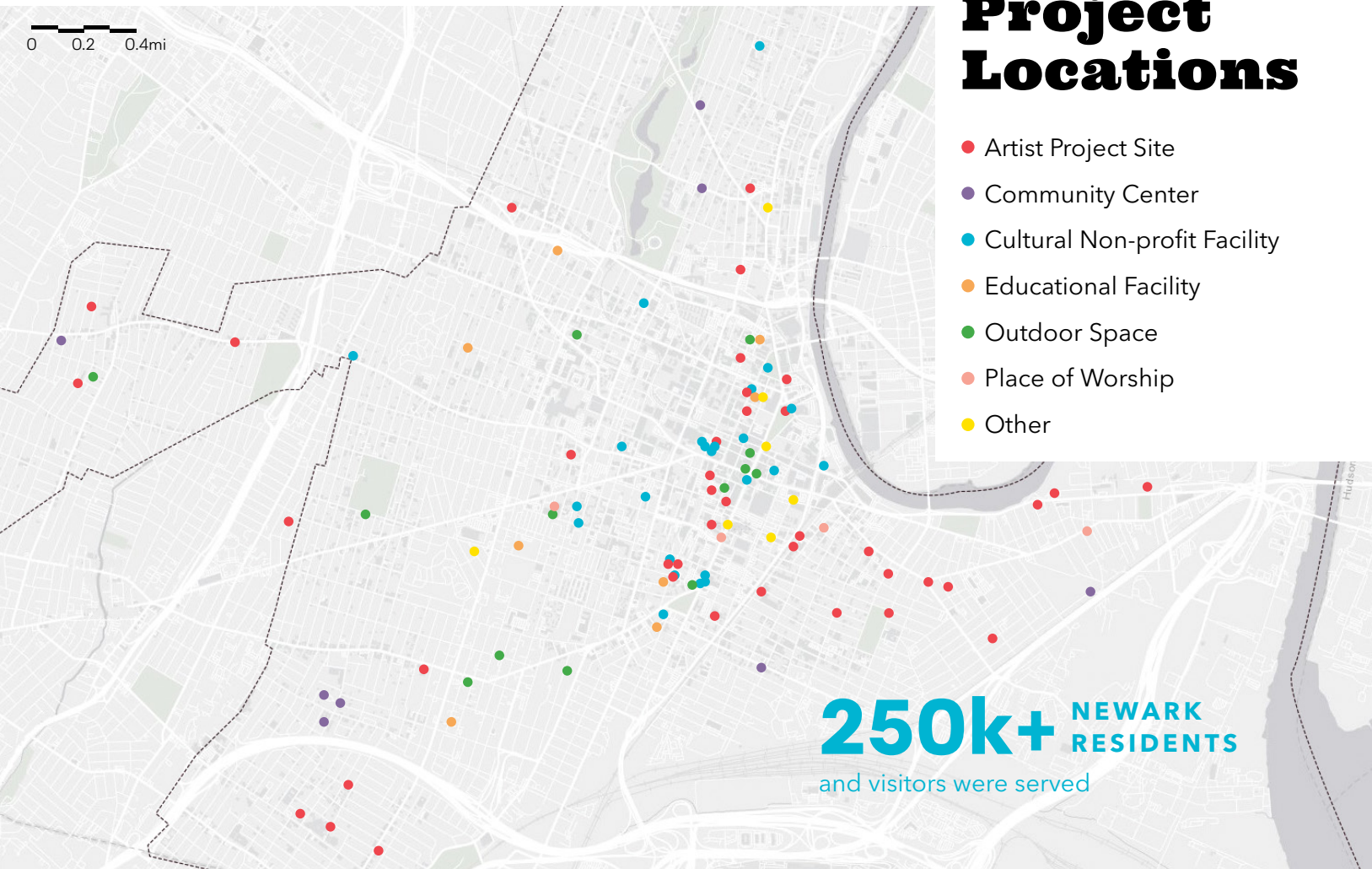
— Elijah Bell  
*Literary Arts/Poetry, South Ward*



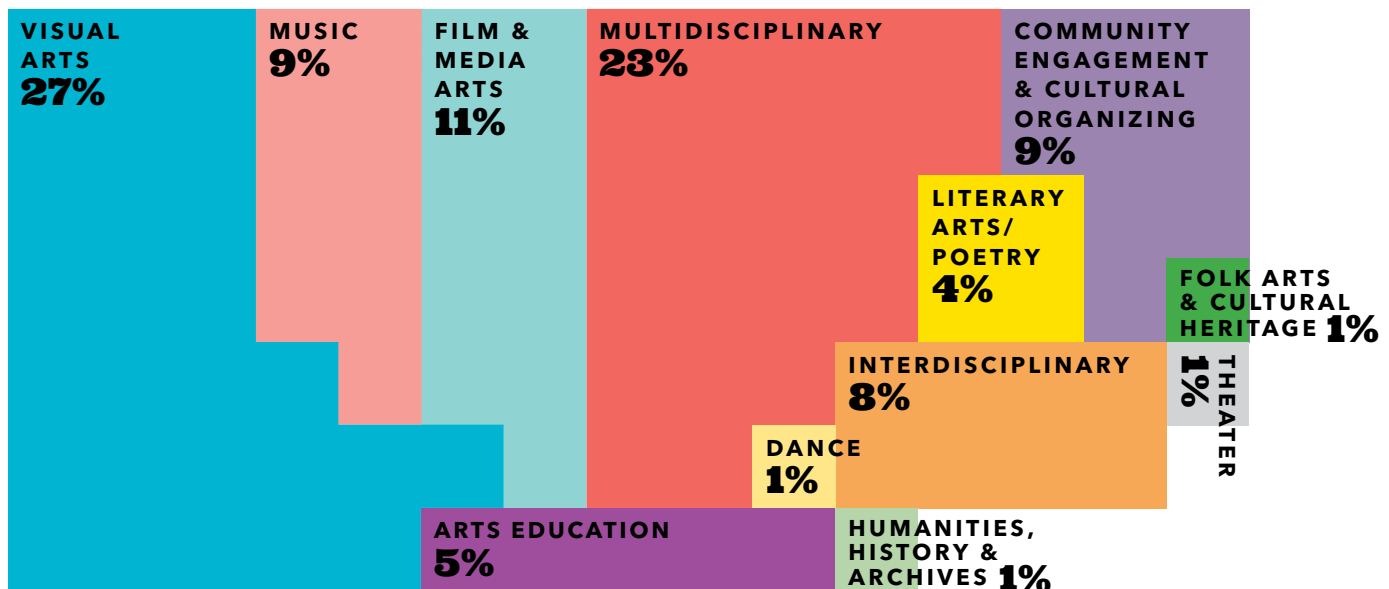
Nadia Liz Estela



# Funded Project Locations



## Grantees by Artistic Discipline





# How Grantees Used the Funds

**1,000+** **ADDITIONAL ARTISTS**  
were paid for their work

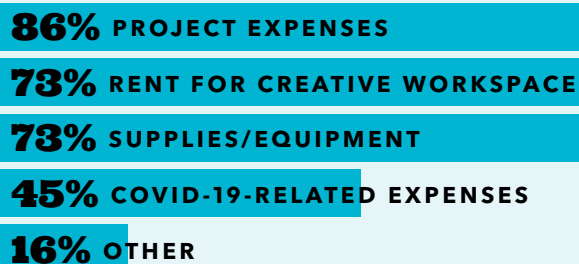
## General Operating Support Grantees



**32** **CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS**

received General Operating Support grants

## Artist Fellowships Grantees



**102** **ARTISTS & COLLECTIVES**

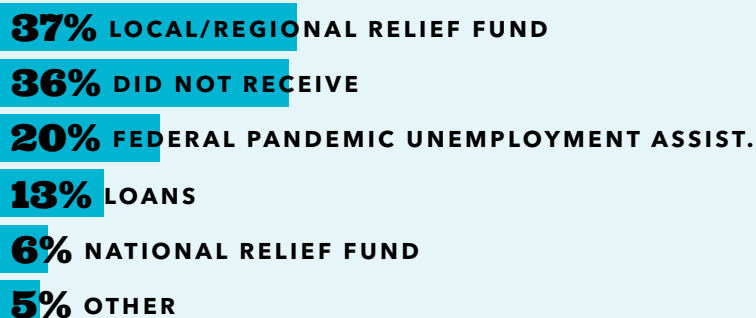
received Artist Fellowship grants

**“The funds were instrumental in my ability to compensate the artists/collaborators who worked so diligently on my film project.”**

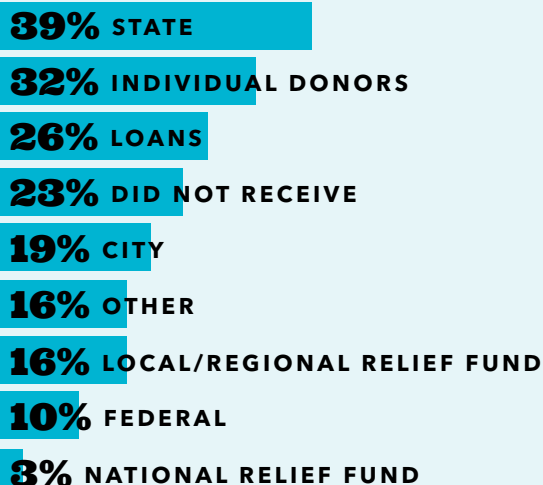
– Bimpé Fageyinbo  
*Literary Arts/Poetry, Central Ward*



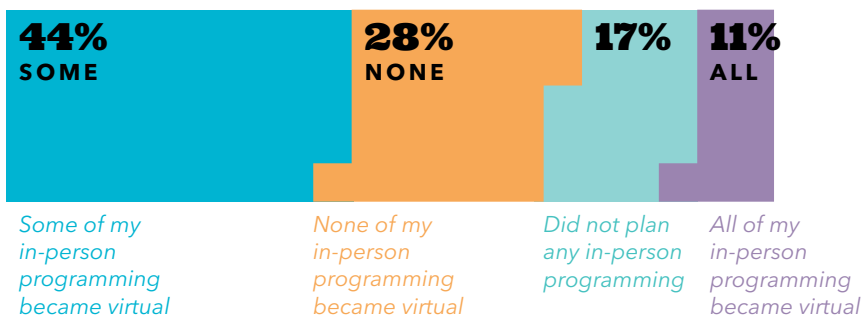
## Artist Fellowships Grantees – Sources of Covid-19 Relief Funds



## General Operating Support Grantees – Source of Covid-19 Relief Funds



## In-person to Virtual Programming



# Impact of the Pandemic

## Financial Impact

All but 2 CCF applicants estimated some amount of Covid-related monetary loss in 2021. The total amount of monetary loss was estimated at \$6.3 million, with an average of **\$17,300 for artists** and **\$108,300 for organizations**.

## Programming Impact

Over half of grantees were forced to shift some or all of their in-person programming to virtual in 2021, with **only 28%** of grantees holding all of their programming in person as planned.

## Relief Support

**77% of grantee organizations** and **64% of grantee artists** received some form of relief support, which came from a variety of sources.



The Newark Boys' Chorus virtual practice





**“The shutdowns pretty much halted all live shows. Even once things opened up a little, live events came with a lot of restrictions. But thanks to the City of Newark, Mayor Ras Baraka, and Newark Arts, Vibes In The City was able to get our community back together late 2020 and we carried that momentum into 2021.”**

– Vibes In The City  
Community Engagement and  
Cultural Organizing, Central Ward



**“The Creative Catalyst Fund has been vital in enabling us to push ahead with our most community-oriented and strategic work.”**

– DreamPlay Media  
Film and Media Arts, Central Ward



Clockwise: Vibe in the City performance,  
Josue Simon playing saxophone,  
Producer's Edge podcast,  
Urban Creative Arts Workshops





Above: Trilogy An Opera Company  
Right: Antoinette Ellis-Williams

**“I am proud to be a Newark native and honored that the city is super supportive of the Artists from here.”**

– Christofer Davis  
*Visual Arts, Central Ward*



**“COVID is affecting all artists in the same way: financially and emotionally. It means the world to have the support of my city.”**

– LOTYS  
*Music, Central Ward*



**“The CCF has been invaluable to my artistic work. The installation was visited by art professionals that has led to subsequent opportunities. The grant has propelled my art practice further refining my multidisciplinary tools and skills.”**

– Antoinette Ellis-Williams  
*Multidisciplinary, North Ward*



# Public Art

## Raymond Boulevard Mural

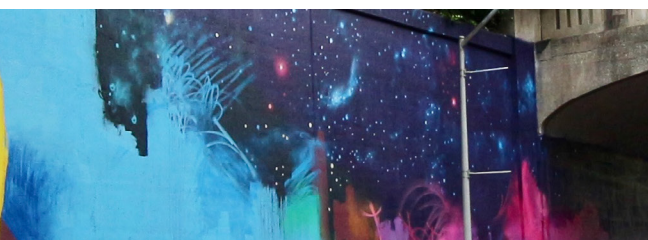
In November 2021, a new mural titled *The Future Nurtures the Past* by artist duo, Rorshach, was installed along a half-mile stretch Raymond Blvd. from University Ave to Lock St. in the Central Ward of Newark. The mural acts as a vibrant portal for those in transit. Each side shares a rush of color, colliding gradients, and forms, hinged by monumental-sized human hands. The hands are those of unrecognized women leaders from our community that have shown the artists and others continuous care.

For decades, these walls held the tags of hundreds of Tri-state area graffiti writers. To preserve and honor the writers of the past, Rorshach recreated multiple layers of writing and marks beneath the blocks of color.



## Stronger Together Mural

In October 2021, Newark Arts, Red Bull, and the City of Newark announced the completion of "Stronger Together," a multi-facade mural project by Newark artist, Yasmin De Jesus, and defenseman for the New Jersey Devils and Red Bull Athlete, P.K. Subban. The murals wrap the front entrance of the Sharpe James Kenneth A. Gibson Recreation & Aquatic Center. "Stronger Together" aims to promote diversity in hockey and to reframe a sport that has historically lacked representation.







## George Floyd Statue

In June 2021, a larger-than-life statue paying tribute to George Floyd was installed on the steps of City Hall. Created by artist Stanley Watts and commissioned by actor and filmmaker Leon Pinkney as a donation to the city, the statue will remain in place for at least one year in recognition of the national impact of Floyd's death.

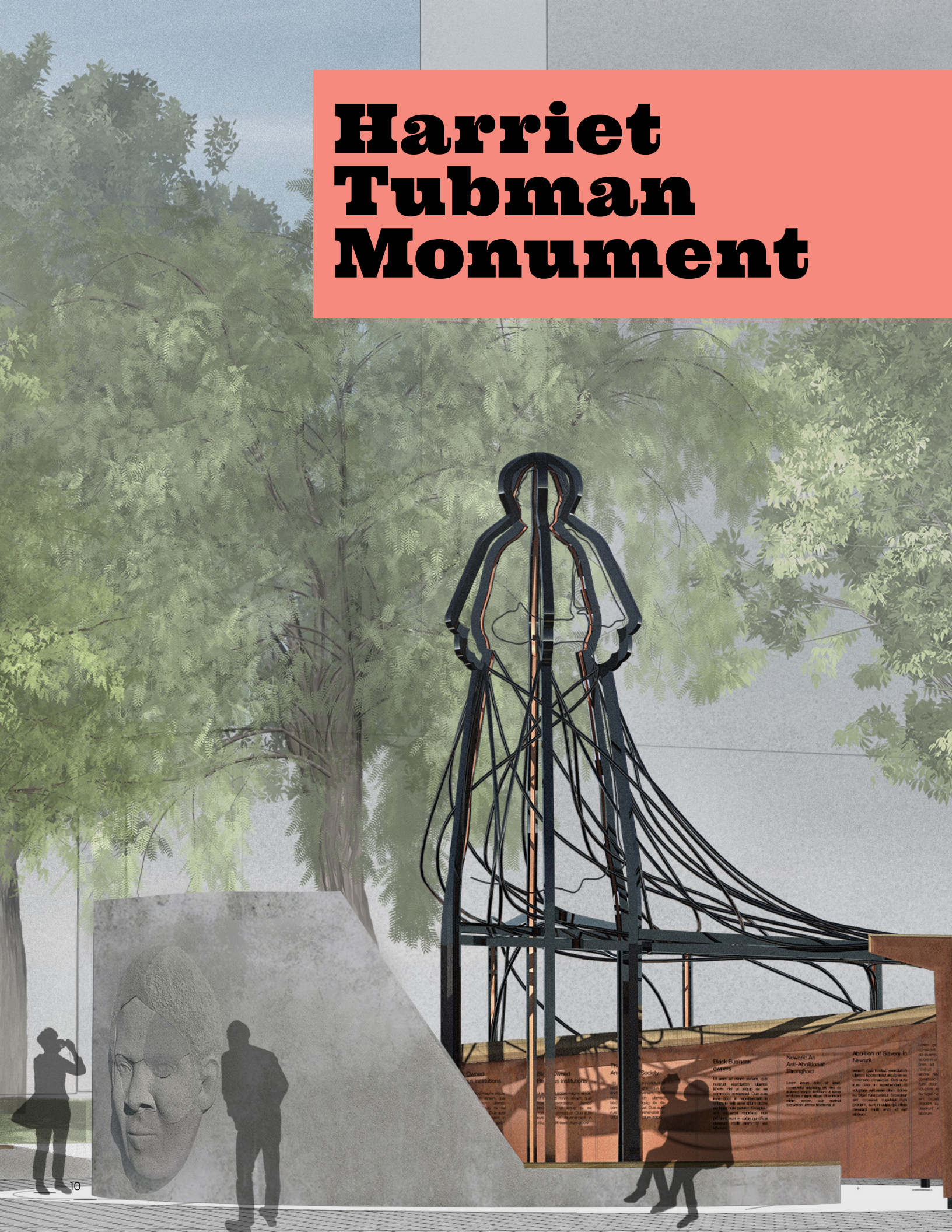
## Ken Gibson Statue

In September 2021, Mayor Baraka unveiled a statue by Thomas J. Warren in front of City Hall honoring former Mayor Kenneth A. Gibson, who served from 1970 to 1986, following a tumultuous time of civil unrest in the late 1960s. As Newark's first Black mayor, he paved the way for many African American elected officials across New Jersey and around the country.





# Harriet Tubman Monument



Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in 1822 in Maryland. She escaped to freedom in 1849 and became a leader in the Underground Railroad, helping hundreds of enslaved people escape to freedom. She was known as "Mama Harriet" for her kindness and strength. She died in 1913 in Auburn, New York.

**Black Business Owners**

Harriet Tubman was a strong advocate for Black business owners. She believed that Black people should own their own businesses and be self-sufficient. She encouraged Black people to start businesses and to support each other in their efforts to build a strong Black community.

**Newark's Anti-Slavery Stronghold**

Newark was a stronghold for the anti-slavery movement in the 19th century. It was a place where many abolitionists gathered and where they fought for the end of slavery. Harriet Tubman was one of the many abolitionists who worked in Newark, and she played a key role in the movement.

**Abolition of Slavery in Newark**

The abolition of slavery in Newark was a significant event in the city's history. It was a result of the efforts of many abolitionists, including Harriet Tubman, who fought for the freedom of enslaved people. The abolition of slavery in Newark was a triumph for the anti-slavery movement and a testament to the power of human courage and determination.



In October 2020, Mayor Baraka announced that the City would commission a new monument honoring Harriet Tubman, the heroic abolitionist who escaped slavery and helped many others do the same through the Underground Railroad, which passed through many sites in New Jersey and specifically in Newark. The new monument will be built on the former site of a Christopher Columbus statue that was removed from Washington Park in the summer of 2020 following calls for racial justice. The Mayor also announced that the City would rename Washington Park to Harriet Tubman Square in 2022.

In 2021, the City held a national open call for artists to design the monument. Residents were invited to offer their opinions about the proposed designs from five finalist artists, which were taken into consideration by the jury of art experts, historians, and community stakeholders.

The conceptual design submitted by New Jersey artist Nina Cooke John was announced as the winner in June 2021 in honor of Juneteenth, one

year following the removal of the Christopher Columbus statue. Cooke John's design, titled "Shadow of a Face," envisions the renamed park as a place of pilgrimage where people will visit from all corners of Newark and beyond to learn about New Jersey's role in the Underground Railroad.

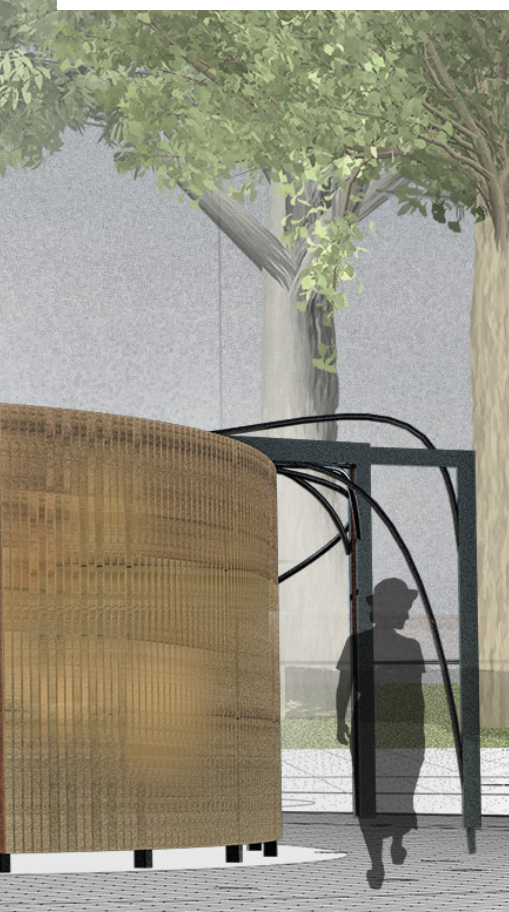
Cooke John is working with Newark-based artist Adebunmi Gbadebo as an apprentice to assist with community engagement throughout the project. In partnership with Audible, the Newark Museum of Art, the Newark Public Library, and other local partners, community workshops have brought together Newark residents to create clay tiles that will be incorporated into a mosaic on the monument, as well as to record their personal stories of struggle and liberation that will be a part of an audio experience for monument visitors.

The monument is expected to be completed in late 2022.

**"We thought it wasn't enough to remove statues. We should be replacing them and building them and talking about the history itself."**

— Mayor Baraka  
*PBS NewsHour, January 2, 2022*

Rendering of proposed statue by Nina Cooke John



Community workshop

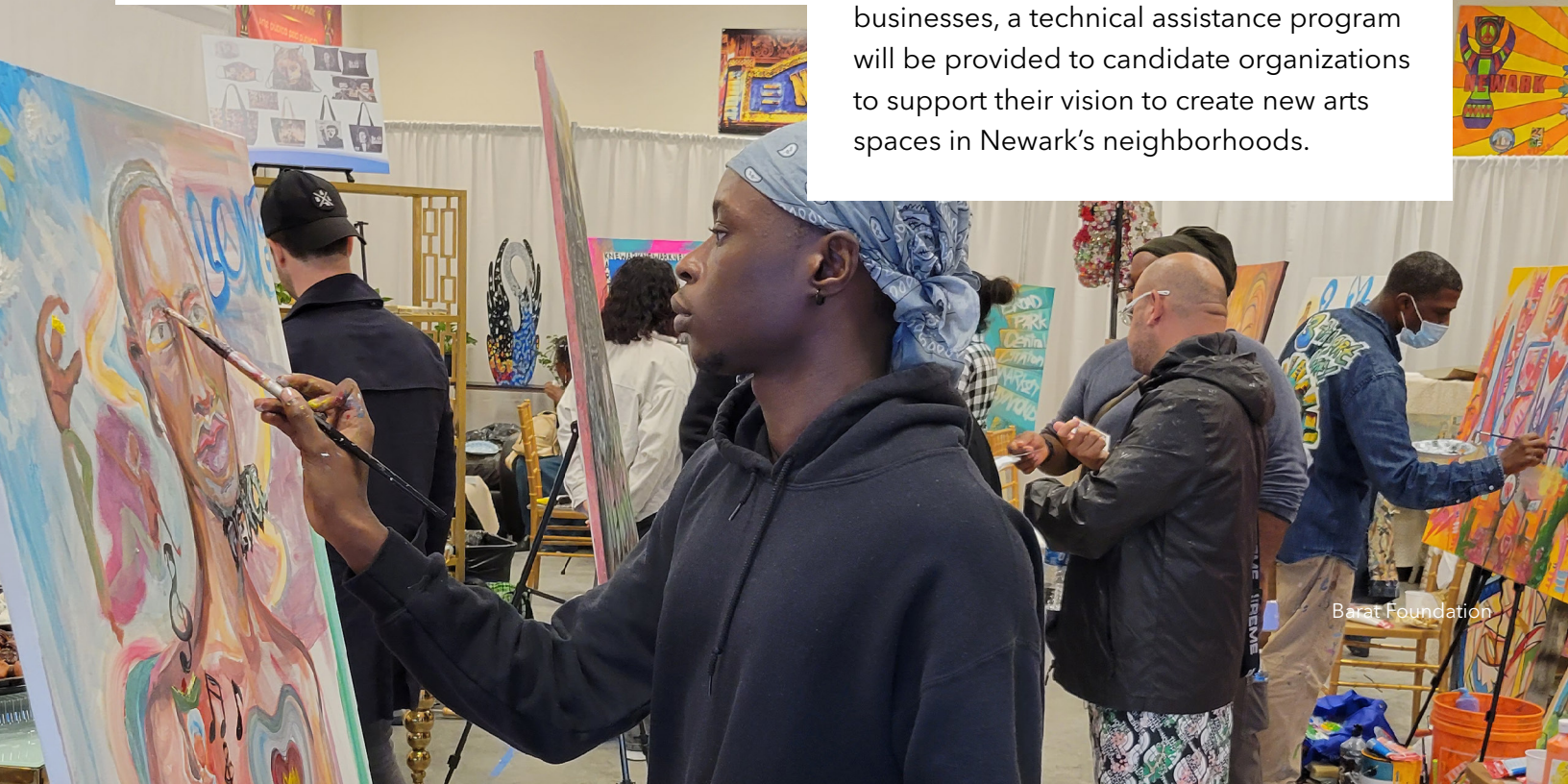


# Looking Forward

USING THE ARTS TO TRANSFORM  
OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

## Art Space Initiative

Beginning in 2023, the city will lease three to five vacant city-owned spaces to arts organizations, with the possibility of purchase after five years. In partnership with Artspace, a nonprofit specializing in affordable spaces for artists and creative businesses, a technical assistance program will be provided to candidate organizations to support their vision to create new arts spaces in Newark's neighborhoods.



## Gant-Gilbert Arts Collective at 505 Clinton Avenue

The Gant-Gilbert Arts Collective redevelopment will provide the community of Clinton Hill and the City of Newark a new cultural art, education, residential and social center that offers opportunity to build the creative and business capacity, a source for individual and neighborhood growth.







## Asphalt Art

As part of Bloomberg Philanthropies' Asphalt Art Initiative, the underpass at the intersection of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and the Interstate 280 Off-ramp (at the Broad Street light rail station) will be transformed into an immersive neighborhood portal through visual storytelling and art activation in early 2023.

Proposed mural location

## Lincoln Park Coast Cultural District & Newark Symphony Hall

Mayor Baraka identified the historic Lincoln Park neighborhood as a priority for economy-driven revitalization, in tandem with a \$50M renovation of its anchor institution, Newark Symphony Hall. The Lincoln Park Coast Cultural District is a nonprofit organization tasked with planning a comprehensive arts and cultural district in the Lincoln Park neighborhood.



## Newark Community Museum

In June 2020, concurrent with social unrest and calls for racial justice, Mayor Baraka announced that the City's First Police Precinct will be closed and the building will house an Office of Violence Prevention & Trauma Reduction as well as a Community Museum to tell the story of Newark's march toward equity and social justice. As a first step, Mayor Baraka named a Museum Advisory Committee, led by city historian Junius Williams, which engaged in a six-month planning process in 2021. The museum is in the process of hiring an Executive Director and beginning community programming across the city, seeded by a \$240,000 grant from the Ford Foundation.







**“The Creative Catalyst Fund has had a huge impact on our ability to continue to adapt and respond to the needs of our community during these unprecedented times.”**

– Newark Print Shop  
Arts Education, Central Ward



**“The funds from this grant have supported my ability to get into the biggest show of my career thus far.”**

– Adebunmi Gbadebo  
Visual Arts, South Ward

**“The timely nature of the CCF has been a blessing, as it allowed us to continue work and paying artists, even when the world pivoted due to COVID.”**

– Paul Robeson Galleries  
Visual Arts, Central Ward



Apiary in the Sky





**“Over 200 individuals have been served through the “Piano Bus” program.”**

– Keys 2 Success  
Music, East Ward

**“Newark’s Creative Catalyst Fund unlocked an explosive demand for piano lessons** for Newark children as young as two years old, all the way through high school.

This summer, we experimented with an idea – *what if we brought piano lessons out to students by transporting instruments and teachers to the students?* The “Piano Bus” exceeded all expectations. 101 students attended piano lessons during the summer camp. Keys 2 Success programs grew seemingly overnight from one ward in Spring 2021 in all five wards of the city by Summer 2021.

Using a rented minivan, we transported battery-powered keyboards and speakers between sites in Newark. The minivan was also helpful in



transporting staff and volunteers, as most do not have access to a car. In addition, battery-powered equipment enabled classes to be held outdoors when indoor space was not available.

This fall, the demand for piano lessons has continued to surge. Over 200 individuals have been served through the “Piano Bus” program. Classes are now occurring in community centers, houses of worship, gyms, and gardens. In addition, hosting classes at nontraditional locations catalyzed further collaboration with other communities.”



# Creative Catalyst

## Fund Grantees

### ARTIST

#### FELLOWSHIPS

Adama Delphine Fawundu	GEMNYE
Adebunmi Gbadebo	Gianluca Bianchino
Adrienne Wheeler	Hellane Freeman
Akintola Hanif	Henny Harmon
Al-Munir LLC	Jared "J Read" Fontaine
Aleta J. Bess	Jacob Lawrence Mandel
AlkhemCo LLC	Jahi Lendor
Amanda J Thackray	James "Biscuit" Rouse
Angela Pilgrim	Jaz Graf
Antoinette Ellis-Williams	Jo-El Lopez
Antoinette Montague	John D Murray
Apiary in the Sky, LLC	Josue Simon
ARK REPUBLIC	Justin Francesco Arts
Armisey Nyree Smith	Kevin Blythe Sampson
Aurway Repertory Theatre	Kween Moore
Bimpé Fageyinbo	Kwesi O Kwarteng
Boshia Raejean	LAND Collective
Bri Blvck	Laquan Brinson
Bryon Summers	Layqa Nuna Yawar
BYHAZE	Lena Medeiros
Carter "Roc" Mangan Jr.	Lillian Ribeiro
Cazorla + Saleme	Livingston Steele
Celeste A. Bateman	Margie "Mia X" Johnson
Cement Gallery	Marylou & Jerome Bongiorno
Cesar Melgar	Mashell Black
Ché Williams	Matilda Forsberg
Chelsea Odufu	Matt Gosser
Chopp Stewart	Matthew Williams
Christen Clifford	Maurice Chestnut
Chrystofer Davis/Dolo Foto	MODSAICA LLC
Davynte "Red" Pannell	Nadia Liz Estela
Dominique Duroseau	Nadus
Elijah Bell	Nelise Nasheida
EvoluCulture	Nell Painter
Fine as art LLC	Nene Aïssatou Diallo
Gabriel Ribeiro	Noelle Lorraine Williams

### GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT

Akwaaba Gallery  
 All Stars Project  
 Artfront Galleries  
 Artistic Passion and Purpose  
 Arts ETC  
 Barat Foundation  
 Dirty Soles Foundation  
 DreamPlay Media  
 EqualSpace LLC  
 Four Corners Public Arts  
 Gallery Aferro  
 GlassRoots  
 Index Art Center  
 Institute of Jazz Studies  
 Ivy Hill Vailsburg Center for Arts Culture and Community Activism  
 Keys 2 Success  
 Lincoln Park Coast Cultural District  
 New Arts Justice  
 Newark Boys Chorus School  
 Newark Moonlight Cinema LLC  
 Newark Print Shop  
 Newark School of the Arts  
 Newark Symphony Hall  
 Paul Robeson Galleries  
 Project for Empty Space  
 SAS PERFORMING Arts Company and Studios Inc.  
 School of the Garden State Ballet  
 The HUBB Arts & Trauma Center  
 The Newark Journal  
 Trilogy  
 Yendor, LLC



## **Creative Catalyst Fund Selection Committee**

Lauren Craig, Newark Arts

Keith Hamilton, City of Newark Dept. of  
Economic and Housing Development

Rebecca Jampol, Project for Empty  
Space

Jeremy Johnson, Newark Arts

Taneshia Laird, Newark Symphony Hall

Kween Moore, Artist/Curator

Laura Bonas Palmer, Akwaaba Gallery

Kitab Rollins, New Jersey Performing  
Arts Center

Marianna Schaffer, Dodge Foundation

Susan Schear, ARTISIN

John Schreiber, New Jersey Performing  
Arts Center

Emma Wilcox, Gallery Aferro

## **Harriet Tubman Monument Selection Committee**

James Amemasor, Historian

Joslyn Bowling Dixon, Newark Public  
Library

Dr. Linda Caldwell Epps, Historian

Paul M. Farber, Monument Lab

Keith Hamilton, City of Newark Dept. of  
Economic and Housing Development

Linda Harrison, Newark Museum of Art

Rebecca Jampol, Project for Empty  
Space

Jeremy Johnson, Newark Arts

Gera Lozano, Artist

Damon Rich, Artist

Dr. Salamishah Tillet, Rutgers University  
– Newark

Jasmine Wahi, Project for Empty Space

Noelle Lorraine Williams, Historian

Layqa Nuna Yawar, Artist

## **Newark Community Museum Advisory Committee**

City Historian and Committee Chair:

Junius Williams

Committee Members:

Beatrice Adams

Israel Alford

Tom Ankner

Kaleena Berryman

Peter Blackmer

Mary Dowd

Lakeesha Eure

Kenneth Gifford

Carolyn Granato

Linda Harrison

Wilhelmina Holder

Nicole Johnson

Tracey Knuckles

Allison Ladd

Roger Leon

LaMonica McIver

Vanessa Mitchell

Raymond Ocasio

Shoshanna Page

Mike Rodriguez

David Scutari

fayemi shakur

Roger Smith

Yolanda Stokes

Christopher Watson

Shamere Williams

Kyleesha Wingfield

Komozi Woodard

Baba Zayid-Muhammad

## **Supporters**

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Audible

Bloomberg Philanthropies

Community Foundation of New Jersey

Ford Foundation

Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation

Newark Arts

Newark City Parks Foundation

New Jersey State Council on the Arts

Prudential

## **Thank you**

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- LaMonica McIver  
(Council President, Central Ward  
Council Member)
- Patrick O. Council  
(South Ward Council Member)
- C. Lawrence Crump  
(Council Member-At-Large)
- Carlos M. Gonzalez  
(Council Member-At-Large)
- Dupre Kelly  
(West Ward Council Member)
- Luis A. Quintana  
(Council Member-At-Large)
- Anibal Ramos Jr.  
(North Ward Council Member)
- Louise Scott-Rountree  
(Council Member-at-Large)
- Michael J. Silva  
(East Ward Council Member)



